

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 819  
By Sargent

A RESOLUTION to honor the Bethlehem United Methodist  
Church on its 150th anniversary.

WHEREAS, Tennessee is proud to salute the accomplishments of our historic churches which celebrate venerable milestones; and

WHEREAS, the Bethlehem United Methodist Church has been serving God, its members and the community faithfully for 150 years; and

WHEREAS, the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church South was organized as an active church in the Grassland community of Williamson County in 1848, with the first members entered on the roll in April of that year; and

WHEREAS, the congregation was formed through the merger of two smaller local Methodist churches in the local area, Union Methodist, established in 1819 and located on the hill east of the junction of Sneed Road and Vaughn's Gap, and Beech Grove Methodist, established in 1833 and located near Manley Lane; and

WHEREAS, the original land for the construction of the church was donated by William and Elizabeth Armstrong in 1848; and

WHEREAS, the deed of record states the land was given to the Trustees of the church and their "successors in office forever...that they should meet and build or cause to be done thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church South

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according to the rules and disciplines of said church from time to time as may be agreed upon and adopted."; and

WHEREAS, the site for the new church was adjacent to one of the new roads, later named Hillsboro Pike, connecting Nashville and Franklin; and

WHEREAS, worship services were held in temporary locations on-site, weather permitting, or in members homes until the first building was completed; and

WHEREAS, during the winter months, the joists, rafters and studs were assembled, precut, marked with Roman numerals and stacked so that when the weather allowed construction to begin, the workers would know where each part was supposed to fit; and

WHEREAS, construction was completed in the summer of 1849 and the Dedication Service for the building was held on August 24 of that year; and

WHEREAS, the service was conducted by the first minister assigned to Bethlehem, the Reverend Ferdinand Petway, a Franklin native; and

WHEREAS, for 150 productive years the Church has been a beacon of light to the Grassland community, growing from a small country church to one with a thriving congregation with nearly 900 members; and

WHEREAS, despite the tremendous growth of Williamson County in the last thirty years and the obvious impact that that growth has had on all aspects of community and church activity, Bethlehem's purpose has remained steadfast and constant: to preach the Word, to be in ministry and to serve as faithful disciples; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James Hughes currently serves as church pastor, providing inspirational messages and guidance to the Bethlehem faithful; and

WHEREAS, on Sunday, May 3, 1998, members of the Bethlehem United Methodist Church will joyously celebrate their multitude of blessings with a 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary service; and

WHEREAS, in that service, Dr. James Hughes will be assisted by Charles Poole, who was assigned to the church at the recognition of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church. Dr. Poole is fondly known throughout Methodism for his informative sermons, constant smile and "never-met-a-person-I-didn't-like" attitude; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we recognize the Bethlehem United Methodist Church; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor and commend the Bethlehem United Methodist Church congregation as they celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church and wish them every continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.